

## *An Open Letter to Voices of Conscience*

# When it comes to police terror, WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Dear Celebrities who still remain silent; Progressive people who care but have not acted; People of means who may not face police terror personally but who could provide the means for those who bear the brunt of this everyday a platform where their courageous voices could move the hearts and minds of the broader public:

You live in a country that has, since its birth, considered Black lives as less than human. The ideology of white supremacy that this country was founded on, that justified slavery and propelled forward the development of capitalism has continued down through the centuries—through discriminatory laws and terror unleashed upon a people—to this very day. From Jim Crow and lynching to mass incarceration and police who murder with impunity—this has throughout the history of this country been justified under the pretense of CRIME and keeping “the good people safe”—recycled and re-purposed for different decades.

### **You who would condemn Jim Crow Yesterday... Where are you now and what would YOU do today?**

Whole generations of Black and Latino people have been criminalized and consigned to utterly inhuman conditions of mass incarceration. The largest prison population in the world exists in our midst—hiding in plain sight with the consent of a population that for decades has tolerated a travesty of historic proportions.

A system of punishment of the poor—where there is NOT equality and justice for all but laws that comprise a modern day system of debtor peonage and government discrimination—paying forward the misery to each new generation in a downward spiral with genocidal consequences.

A thousand people a year—850 this year so far killed by police. Video after video of people pulled over in minor traffic violations, videos of people surrendering, videos of people running away, videos of people mentally ill instead of getting medical attention being summarily executed. Instance after instance of people doing nothing other than being Black or Latino but who are profiled, stopped and so often shot down because they “look like a suspect.”

Police who consider whole groups of people—because of the color of their skin or the language they speak—as having no rights that the police are bound to respect.

You know this—this has been brought to your attention because people have risen up to say, “Enough! We will not have this.” This was brought to your attention because many thousands of young people disrupted business as usual over that last year.

At a moment when that resistance is being shushed, when demonstrators are being prosecuted and police who murder are protected, when “Go slow, let the system work,” is being counseled by people more interested in preserving the status quo than changing it—and when liberals are too easily assuaged by promises of minor policy changes like body cameras (yes this can make a difference but now that we are seeing video after video without prosecution—the question is: What NOW Are You Going to Do?): Rise Up October is saying that protest must not be derailed. The controversy must not be suppressed, and the resistance that has made THE difference must be re-mobilized to go to another level.

If it is not, not only will nothing in the end have actually changed, but the pace of the brutality and barbarity will have intensified. With the political and moral atmosphere being fouled by wall-to-wall election coverage of arenas filled with morons cheering for undisguised bigotry and reported on by ALL the major media as “legitimate,” nothing less than many, many thousands of us taking to the streets with renewed determination will change this ugly dynamic and set different moral and political terms. To say most clearly: THIS MUST STOP.

There is a way to do this. By participating and supporting financially the outpouring on October 22 through 24. These days open with 100 families traveling from all over the country, joined with prominent voices where we will **Say Their Names** in Times Square on October 22. On October 23, there will be nonviolent civil disobedience. A massive march on October 24 will aim at changing the terms of how people think and act, politically rocking the country so that everyone has to decide: “On the matter of POLICE MURDER AND TERROR MUST STOP, Which Side Am I On? Will my silence be complicity or will I stand with the people who refuse to tolerate these outrages?” Those who carry out, back up and enforce this terror have to be rocked back on their heels. THIS MUST STOP.

The controversy must not be shut down and the suffering that continues must not allowed to be swept under the rug. Millions have to demand THIS MUST STOP.

As Lorian Carter, aunt of Tony Robinson killed by Madison Police this past year, put it:

**“The ‘Truths’ they are providing to you are not truths at all. The reason #RiseUpOctober is so important is because I neglected the facts and my nephew paid... If this makes you uncomfortable, I’m glad. It should. The blood of all these people stain your hands, the same way it does mine.”**

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION:

1. Contribute \$1,000 dollars at <http://igg.me/at/RiseUpOctober/x> to sponsor family members who have lost loved ones to police murder to come to NYC.
2. Make a substantial donation for advertising and getting the word out at <http://igg.me/at/RiseUpOctober/x>.
3. Be part of Reading the Names on October 22. Contact [addmyvoice@riseupoctober.org](mailto:addmyvoice@riseupoctober.org)
4. Endorse the call initiated by Carl Dix and Cornel West and commit to getting five other endorsements of prominent people, churches and organizations to. **Read the call below** and SEND ENDORSEMENT to [addmyvoice@riseupoctober.org](mailto:addmyvoice@riseupoctober.org)
5. Publicly commit to being in New York City on October 24. Contact [addmyvoice@riseupoctober.org](mailto:addmyvoice@riseupoctober.org)
6. Call the Rise Up October National Office at 646-709-1961 to find out what more you can do.

### *Initiated by Carl Dix and Cornel West*

#### *Advisory Board includes:*

*Carl Dix, Eve Ensler, Arturo O’Farrill, Jamal Joseph, Rev. Stephen Phelps and Cornel West*

# Call for a Major National Manifestation Against Police Terror

## #RiseUpOctober to STOP Police Terror

## Which Side Are You On? Come to New York City!

### **OCTOBER 24**

Washington Square Park  
New York City 11:00 am  
March 1:00 pm  
Closing Rally  
Columbus Circle 4:00 pm

**Actions on October 22 & 23**

**Eric Garner... Michael Brown...Freddie Gray... Rekia Boyd... Andy Lopez...Tamir Rice**

One after another—and so many others, precious Black and Brown lives—victims of police murder. We think of their faces, and furiously ache for justice. Over 1000 people a year killed by police—yet since 2005, less than 60 indictments, less than 25 convictions! \* (see footnote)

Millions languish in prison, generation after generation, Black and Latino brothers and sisters. The spearpoint of a whole matrix of oppression.

People have struggled, resisted, risen up. This must go on and go further—in many different ways, intensifying.

At the same time, these repeated outrages cry out for a major, national manifestation this fall that states very clearly:

**NO! THESE MURDERS BY POLICE MUST STOP—NOW!!**

This demonstration will be resistance-based, uncompromising in spirit and, at the same time, pluralistic and diverse, involving hundreds of thousands of people, reaching into every corner of this society and powerfully impacting the whole world.

History has shown that no significant change has been won without mass determined resistance.

We refuse to be derailed by promises of reform that are merely that: promises. We refuse to be intimidated by government repression or by threats from forces of open and unrepentant racism and fascism. We will respond to the urgency of the political situation by mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people to take to the streets to say these horrors must stop.

We aim to amplify the many forms of resistance against police murder and mass incarceration. More important, we aim to change the whole social landscape, to the point where a growing section of people all over take ever-increasing initiative and make it unmistakably clear that they refuse to live in a society that sanctions this outrage, and where those who do NOT feel this way are put on the defensive.

Join us—on October 24 in the streets of New York City.